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Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination
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item 9

THE QUESTION OF EAST TIMOR

by JOSE GUTERRES

Mr. Chairman,

Since 7 December 1975, the date of the invasion, Indonesian troops have been violating the human rights of the East Timorese people. I was thirteen years old when Indonesian military forces invaded East Timor. Following the invasion I went into the bush with FRETILIN. Later, in April 1979, I was captured by Indonesian soldiers from the 631 Battalion. On 24 July 1980 I was arrested and tortured by the Indonesian military in Dili. On 19 August 1980 they sent me to the Komarca prison, Dili, where I was held until being transferred on 3 September 1980 to the island of Ataúro. In July 1984 I was released. I started working for the Indonesian Red Cross in 1985, and on 7 February 1987 arrived in Portugal.

For 12 years I lived, experienced and witnessed the behaviour of the Indonesian invaders; arbitrary executions, imprisonment, torture, rape, transfers in masse of people to

concentration camps, denial of freedom of expression, etc. are scenes which are part of the East Timorese people's everyday life.

Indonesia wants to make the world believe that such violations do not occur in East Timor, claiming that the East Timorese people voluntarily asked for integration in the Indonesian Republic. We ask Indonesia, if a true referendum was really held on 17 July 1976 - the day proclaimed as the day of the constitution of Indonesia's "27th Province". How could there possibly have been a real referendum, when at that time the majority of the population was to be found up in the mountains in the areas protected by Fretilin guerrillas?

Mr. Chairman,

In 1978-79 Indonesian armed forces carried out a large-scale offensive (known by the Timorese as the "Surround and Annihilate Campaign") against Fretilin and the population under guerrilla protection. Many Timorese fell victims of that massive operation. For example, in the Eastern-Central Sector where I was at that time, in one of the areas around Barique on the places of the south coast called Natar Bora, part of the population was killed as a result of the intense bombing raids by six Bronco hunter places (known in Timor as "Sakunar"). Mortar grenades, Howitzer-type weapons, bazookas and incendiary bombs were all employed. Wherever they passed through, Indonesian troops destroyed crops, burned down houses and killed cattle, just as they did in Karau Monu, Sarin, Natar Bora, Fehuc Rim and Kakae Uma. The population was forced to surrender

to the invaders. Countless people were taken prisoner during these operations. Many of those who surrendered or who were taken prisoner, especially the stronger or more educated men, were accused by the Indonesian military of being guerrillas or FRETILIN activists and therefore, brutally tortured and later shot dead. This was the fate of, for example, José Carlos, Ramafat, Bais, Joaquim Pinheiro, Almerindo Alves. The women were mercilessly raped by many Indonesian soldiers before being killed. This happened, for example, to Agostinha, Zélia, Irene and others. The other men were used as guides for the Indonesian invaders as the latter advanced. When the 'guides' were no longer needed they were given a "Mandi Laut" which in Indonesian Bahasa means a "dip in the sea" - that is to say they were killed. Children between the ages of 13 and 17 were used to carry loads for the military. Any valuable item which the captured or surrendered Timorese happened to have on them (for example, a watch, gold or silver rings, necklaces, Mexican Coins) were taken from them by the Indonesian soldiers.

Those FRETILIN guerrillas who surrendered to the Indonesian army and who the latter suspected of being dangerous, were shot dead. Such was the fate of Hermenegildo Alves, Fungala, Mau Koli, Lomano, Policarpo, Zacarias, Teófilo do Amaral, and others. Others were forced to head the advance into the bush and fight against their fellow countrymen. They were later shot dead, imprisoned, exiled, or made to 'disappear'.

In 1980 in Mota Ulun and Dare on the outskirts of Dili people were shot by Indonesian troops in retaliation for a

FRETILIN guerrilla operation carried out on 10 June 1980 against the Dili television station in Marabia. Following that operation, Dili prisons (Komarca, Mes Korem, Nangalla, Kodim, Koramil Dili Timur and Koramil Dili Barat) were overflowing with prisoners.

During interrogations prisoners were subjected to torture. Each Indonesian guard employed his own method of torture and, of course, always tried to do something 'new' and 'improved' in relation to previous sessions. These demonstrations were accompanied by bursts of laughter from the other Indonesian officials present, while the victim cried out in pain or begged forgiveness from his executioner.

The various methods of torture used by the Indonesian military during interrogations in the Mes Korem prison, following the 10 June 1980 guerrilla operation, were:

- electric shocks
- beatings with iron or wooden rods
- crushing of toes by placing them under table legs with soldiers and officials sitting on top of the table
- near-drowing in tanks of water, the victim tied up
- being bitten by reptiles
- cigarette burns to the back, ears and sexual organs
- cuts to sexual organs
- kicks with leather boots to chest

The following were (and still are) considered milder forms of torture:

- blows with rifle butts
- 200 press-ups
- 200 scotch-jumps
- looking towards the sun for four hours

I myself witnessed these forms of torture and was subjected to some of the same methods.

Bernadino, Mariano, David, Januário, Afonso Moniz, Cristo Rei and others were subjected to electric shocks and other tortures.

Mateus spent 6 hours with a table leg crushing the toe of his right foot while Indonesian officials and soldiers sat on the table. At the same time he was beaten by other soldiers.

Maria, Beatriz, Marcelina and others were brutally raped by Indonesian military after being subjected to other forms of torture.

An Indonesian soldier by the name of Bader, bit off a piece of the ear of a prisoner called Domingos and then ate it in front of us. Another prisoner, whose name was Danilo, had an ear cut off. Some days later he was sent to Komarca prison and from there 'disappeared'.

On 24 July 1980 the Indonesian military imprisoned a Timorese called Pedro Manek. In Mes Korem he was subjected to electric shocks, beatings, insults and near drowning. A soldier from the 121 Battalion cut off a piece of the prisoner's sexual organ, and they stubbed out cigarettes in his ear as if it were an ashtray. After a week they made him 'disappear'.

A prisoner called Silverio, who worked in Asrama Becora, was kicked in the thorax area 70 times by an Infantry Captain who, at the time of the 10 June 1980 guerrilla operation was stationed at one of the posts near the site of the attack. According to the Captain the 70 kicks were in return for the fright he suffered during the guerrilla attack.

José, Luli Rai, Lúcio, David and others were beaten with rods measuring 1.30 cms. long and subjected to other tortures for a week. The Indonesian military forced the women prisoners to undress the prisoners.

On 12 August 1980 in Mes Korem I, myself was subjected to beatings and torture by bites from reptiles to my sexual organ. Januário, Francisco, Afonso, Carvalho, Agapito and others were prisoners with me in the same group. I was interrogated by a Red Beret (Nangalla) Major called Baguio and by another Indonesian from the secret service (Intel) called Franky. I was brutally beaten by Indonesian military from the 121 Battálion.

The Indonesian military in charge of interrogations were: Ali Musa (major), Baguio (major), Jamrod (captain), Naso (lieutenant), Soroto (lieutenant), Franky (from the mobile brigade). It was with their knowledge or on their orders that the "disappearances" of prisoners from the prisons mentioned were carried out.

On Ataúro island, where approximately 5,000 people (including women, children, old people and disabled) were imprisoned and in spite of International Red Cross presence, Indonesian military continued to torture those prisoners they suspected of

maintaining contact with guerrillas or those who would not obey the military's orders.

In October 1983 prisoners Domingos, Antônio, Gaspar, Florindo, Casimiro, Alcino, Eduardo and Borges were interrogated and subjected to torture. They were later transferred to the Komarca prison, Dili. A teacher called Isaac from Ataúro island was also interrogated. After being tortured he managed to get released but only after handing over a certain amount of money, gold and Mexican coins to the Indonesian Commander. The interrogation was carried out by soldiers of the "Nangalla 4" Company.

All prisoners who dared to speak to any foreign delegation or journalist, without orders from the Indonesian military, were interrogated and tortured once the delegation or journalist had left. This happened to four prisoners who, in September 1983, delivered a list of names of people executed in the Lospalos region to Portuguese journalists. Two of these prisoners are Guilherme and Jorge; the other two are catechists. The four were tortured at night, subjected to electric shocks and beatings. The following day, they were forced into the luggage section of a military helicopter and taken to the Komarca prison, Dili.

In August 1983 during the visit of an Australian delegation headed by Bill Morrison some prisoners were interviewed by the delegation. I too had a short conversation with a journalist accompanying the delegation. When they had left we were summoned to the 'Koramil' (command headquarters) and beaten and threatened

with being shot if such behaviour were ever repeated.

The food provided by the Red Cross was not of good quality and some prisoners went to the Ataúro mountains in search of some edible leaves so they might vary the diet a little. On returning to the camp they were summoned by the Indonesian military, taken to the Ataúro football pitch and beaten with rods 1.30 cms. long. The majority of those beaten were from Quelicai, eastern part of East Timor.

In June 1983 an Indonesian soldier by the name of Mon, punished a group of prisoners (including 20 prisoners from Baucau) just for having found a pack of playing cards in the hut where they lived. As a punishment, they were made to stand looking towards the sun for six hours; then, they had to play cards for 3 days and 3 nights in front of the command post and then, forced to eat the whole pack of cards.

In March 1983, a prisoner called Domingos Boek, who was from Viqueque, was taken away from the island by helicopter and subsequently disappeared. Until today, his family is unaware of his whereabouts and he is not to be found in the L. P. Cipinang prison or any other prison in East Timor.

In 1985, in the Porogoa concentration camp, the following prisoners (originally from Baucau) were tortured just because they were sick and could not take part in the 'gotton royong' (communal work): Afonso, Julião, Amaro, Guilherme and Mateus. They were tied up and then hung from trees for 2 days.

In September 1986 a prisoner, whose name was Antoninho and who had been released from Ataúro in July 1984 (on the same day

as I), was killed by Indonesian soldiers of the 744 Battalion for no apparent reason. Antoninho was married and had five children; he was originally from Laleia and living in Quintal Mascarenhas. His killing happened in Rua de Bemori, next to the João Meira bridge in Dili.

In October 1986, three prisoners from Aileu, Henrique Falcão, Adriano Corte Real and Calistro Corte Real, as well as two functionaries Justino Ribeiro and Egídio de Jesus, were brutally beaten and subjected to electric shocks. I managed to enter the building where they were, without the knowledge of the Indonesian soldiers, and I saw their swollen faces and other signs of ill-treatment.

All those who were in the Ataúro concentration camp, Porogoa and Aileu, are kept under surveillance once they return to their places of origin. They are also forced to carry out guard duties at the look-out posts for most of the day. For example, the people who returned to Lospalos from the Porogoa camp had to go and live with their relatives because their homes had been burned down at the time they were forced to leave for Ataúro. They are unable to get new houses set up because they have to spend their time doing guard duties and also because they are not authorized to travel further than 5 kms. In January 1987 two boys who had come from Lospalos accompanied me to the Turismo Hotel in Dili where some members of the International Red Cross delegation stay, in order to tell them about the situation and to ask for help. However, a nurse of the Delegation said that at that time they were unable to intervene because the kind of help the boys had re-

quested did not fall within the boundaries of the project that was underway.

On returning to their native Ainaro the people who had been in the Ataúro concentration camp were forced to advance at the head of the Indonesian forces during operations carried out against the guerrillas. The International Red Cross is aware of these facts.

Mr. Chairman,

All the suffering that the East Timorese people has borne over the last 12 years, shows that it is denied the right to self-determination. As long as a just solution to the question of East Timor is not found, its people will continue to resist the occupiers, and the suffering will continue.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.